

## **EMPLOYEE/STUDENT COMMUNICATION**

It is the policy of the North Middlesex Regional School District to maintain appropriate communication between students and staff, teachers, and coaches at all times.

The Superintendent and the School Principals will annually remind current staff members and orient new staff members concerning the importance of maintaining proper decorum and adhering to appropriate boundaries in the student/teacher relationship in the on-line, digital world, as well as in person. Employees must conduct themselves in ways that do not distract from or disrupt the educational process. The orientation and reminders will give special emphasis to:

- 1) Improper fraternization with students using Facebook and similar internet sites or social networks, or via cell phone, texting, or telephone.
  - a. Teachers may not list current students or former students below the age of 18, as “friends” on private or personal networking sites.
  - b. All e-contacts with students should be through the district’s computer and telephone system, except in emergency situations.
  - c. All contact and messages by coaches and club/activity advisors with team members shall be sent to all team members, except for messages concerning medical or academic privacy matters, in which case the messages will be copied to the parent/guardian, athletic director, and the school principal. All contact and messages from coaches and club/activity advisors to team and club members will be copied to the athletic director and principal or designee.
  - d. Teachers will not give out their private cell phone or home phone numbers without prior approval of the district. This policy does not apply to family relationships.
  - e. Inappropriate contact via e-mail or phone is prohibited.
- 2) Inappropriateness of posting items with sexual content.
- 3) Inappropriateness of posting items exhibiting or advocating use of drugs and alcohol.
- 4) Examples of inappropriate behavior from other districts, as behavior to avoid.
- 5) Monitoring and penalties for improper use of district computers and technology.
- 6) The possibility of penalties, including dismissal from employment, for failure to exercise good judgment in on-line conduct.

Staff members are already under an obligation to maintain appropriate boundaries in their relationships with students (e.g., staff should avoid excessive attention to a student, communicate only on school-related activities, maintain professionalism, etc.) These same standards apply to electronic communication with students (e.g., social networking, e-mail, “texting,” or other cell phone communication).

The Superintendent or designees will periodically conduct internet searches to see if teachers have posted inappropriate materials on-line. When inappropriate use of computers and websites is discovered, the School Principals and Superintendent will promptly bring that inappropriate use to the attention of the staff member and may consider and apply disciplinary action up to and including termination. Any such discipline will be conducted in accordance with collective bargaining agreements and state and federal law.

SOURCE: MASC

CROSS REFS.: GBEE Social Networking Policy for Staff